

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6716

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 09990

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, XM
SUBJ: ICFTU BOARD MEETING: ORIT-AIFLD CONTRACT

1. SUMMARY: AN ICFTU COMMITTEE IN HAMBURG LAST WEEK DEFERRED A DECISION ON A \$106,000 CONTRACT BETWEEN THE AFL-CIO'S AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT (AIFLD) AND THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS (ORIT). REASON GIVEN: THE COMMITTEE STILL HAD TO REVIEW A TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT, WHICH THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT HAD NEGLECTED TO ATTACH TO ITS PROPOSAL RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACT. FINAL APPROVAL REMAINS IN DOUBT, HOWEVER, SINCE SOME COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF INCREASED ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE WISDOM OF ACCEPTING A CONTRACT WITH US GOVERNMENT FINANCING. END SUMMARY.

2. THOUGH MENTIONED IN A SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT, THE SUBJECT OF AFL-CIO'S CONTINUING NON-AFFILIATION TO THE ICFTU (REFTEL) WAS NOT DISCUSSED BY THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD AT ITS MEETING IN HAMBURG MAY 17-19. HOWEVER, ANOTHER ASPECT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE AFL-CIO AND THE

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ICFTU DID COME UP AT THE MAY 16 MEETING OF THE BOARD'S FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (FPGC). THE FPGC, WHICH MEETS PRIOR TO EVERY BOARD MEETING TO DISCUSS THE MORE SENSITIVE ITEMS, IS MADE UP OF NINE KEY BOARD MEMBERS, CONSIDERABLY AUGMENTED BY "ASSOCIATE MEMBERS" (ICFTU REGIONAL SECRETARIES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS) AND OTHERS. ALTOGETHER,

26 PERSONS ATTENDED THE MAY 16 MEETING.

3. ONE OF THE 23 ITEMS ON THE FGPC AGENDA WAS A CONTRACT SIGNED IN DECEMBER 1977 BETWEEN THE AFL-CIO'S AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FREE LABOR DEVELOPMENT (AIFLD) AND THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS (ORIT), THE ICFTU REGIONAL UNIT. WE HAVE ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS OBTAINED FROM AN ICFTU SECRETARIAT SOURCE BOTH A COPY OF THE SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT PREPARED FOR THE FGPC AND A COPY OF THE MAY 16 MEETING MINUTES.

4. THE SECRETARIAT PAPER INCLUDED AN ATTACHMENT LISTING A CONTRACT BUDGET (PRESUMABLY FOR ONE YEAR) OF \$106,000 COVERING EXPENSES FOR ORIT HEADQUARTERS ADMINISTRATION, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THREE COUNTRIES, AND STAFFING FOUR ORIT SUBREGIONAL OFFICES. OTHERWISE, THE DOCUMENT PROVIDED NO INFORMATION ON THE CONTRACT'S SUBSTANCE, BUT CONCENTRATED ON WHAT AN ICFTU STAFFER CALLS "TECHNICAL" POINTS, THREE IN NUMBER:

(A) AIFLD, AN AFL-CIO INSTITUTE, "MAINLY CARRIES OUT ITS ACTIVITIES WITH FUNDS GRANTED TO IT BY THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RUN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA." ALTHOUGH THE AFL-CIO WITHDREW FROM THE ICFTU IN 1969, IT HAS REMAINED A MEMBER OF THE ICFTU REGIONAL ORGANIZATION, ORIT, "BEING ITS LARGEST CONFIDENTIAL

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AFFILIATE IN TERMS OF DUES-PAYING MEMBERS."

(B) THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD IN NOVEMBER 1977 ADOPTED A RULE AGAINST PERMITTING ICFTU "PROJECTS THAT DEAL WITH TRADE UNION WORK PROPER" TO BE FINANCED WITH FUNDS OBTAINED FROM "EXTRA-BUDGETARY" SOURCES (I.E., OUTSIDE THE ICFTU'S OWN SOLIDARITY FUND), LEST SUCH PROJECTS CREATE A "DEPENDENCY" ON THE ICFTU ITSELF WHEN OUTSIDE FINANCING CEASES. "THE ACCEPTANCE OF EXTRA-BUDGETARY FUNDS TO PERMIT THE NOMINATION OF ORIT REPRESENTATIVES IN FOUR SUBREGIONS" CONFLICTS WITH THAT RULE, THE SECRETARIAT PAPER SAID.

(C) THE CONTRACT WAS SIGNED BEFORE OBTAINING APPROVAL OF THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD. UPON BEING TOLD THAT BOARD APPROVAL WAS REQUIRED, ORIT AND AIFLD AGREED TO "SUSPEND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTRACT."

5. THE SECRETARIAT DOCUMENT WOUND UP WITH THE RECOMMENDATION THAT THE AIFLD/ORIT CONTRACT BE APPROVED "WITH MODIFICATIONS AIMING AT AVOIDING ANY FINANCING OF THE ICFTU'S OWN ACTIVITIES AND THOSE OF ITS REGIONAL

STRUCTURES BY EXTRA-BUDGETARY MEANS." THE PAPER ALSO CONTAINED A WARNING TO ORIT TO GET ICFTU APPROVAL IN ADVANCE BEFORE SIGNING ANY FUTURE CONTRACTS OF THIS NATURE.

6. THE COMMITTEE DID NOT ADOPT THE SECRETARIAT RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT. THE MEETING MINUTES STATE THAT AFTER A "WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION," SOMEBODY POINTED OUT THAT THE COMMITTEE WAS ASKED TO MAKE A DECISION ON A CONTRACT IT HAD NOT SEEN. "THE GENERAL SECRETARY THEREUPON UNDERTOOK TO GIVE THE COMPLETE TEXT AND ALL DETAILS AND APPENDICES OF THE CONTRACT TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FGPC" (SCHEDULED FOR LATE NOVEMBER).

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SECRETARIAT SOURCES EMPHASIZE THAT THE FGPC DID NOT DISAPPROVE THE CONTRACT, BUT SIMPLY "DEFERRED A DECISION" FOR THE TIME BEING. FROM TWO SOURCES OUTSIDE THE SECRETARIAT, HOWEVER, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT SOME EUROPEANS AT THE MEETING DID VOICE DISAPPROVAL OF THE

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6717

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BRUSSELS 09990

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CONTRACT. BEHIND THE NEGATIVE COMMENTS, ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, IS A "LINGERING PREJUDICE" AGAINST US-GOVERNMENT

FINANCED LABOR ACTIVITIES AND AGAINST DOING MUCH TRADE
UNION DEVELOPMENT WORK IN LATIN AMERICA, WHICH IS LARGELY
WRITTEN OFF AS DICTATOR-RIDDEN.

8. J.J. DEL PINO, ORIT GENERAL SECRETARY, WHO
PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING, DID A GOOD JOB OF EXPLAINING
AND DEFENDING THE CONTRACT, WE UNDERSTAND. TOLD THAT
WE HAD HEARD DEL PINO WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE FPGC
MEETING, AN ICFTU STAFFER SAID: "OF COURSE. SO ARE WE."
BUT HE WENT ON TO INSIST THAT THE PROBLEM WOULD BE
SOLVED ONCE THE FPGC WAS ABLE TO REVIEW THE CONTRACT
ITSELF. HINTON

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